



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **For Information Contact:**

**Public Affairs**

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/apr/news.html>

### **District Woman Sentenced For Embezzling Social Security Checks**

WASHINGTON - Shara Curtis, 46, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to 180 days of home detention after earlier pleading guilty to a federal charge of embezzlement of public money, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Curtis pled guilty in March 2011 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. She was sentenced by the Honorable Robert L. Wilkins. The judge also ordered that Curtis make full restitution and that she complete five years of probation.

According to the factual proffer presented to the Court, in 2004, Curtis became the representative payee for a relative who was entitled to Social Security benefits. Accordingly, United States Treasury checks were made payable to her on her relative's behalf. She was responsible to use the money from these checks for the benefit of the relative.

In August 2005, the family member was incarcerated for a crime, thus making him ineligible for Social Security benefits. Beginning in August 2005 and ending with a check dated September 1, 2009, Curtis continued to cash Treasury checks sent to her for the relative's benefit. The total amount embezzled from these checks was \$30,738. A stimulus rebate check for \$250 also was embezzled. Curtis spent the money from cashing the checks on items for her benefit, such as paying her rent and utilities.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Special Agent Matthew Deuchler of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, who investigated the case. He also acknowledged the assistance of Paralegal Specialist Mary Treanor and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Zeno and Assistant U.S. Attorney Seth B. Waxman, who prosecuted the case.

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